

'MALJO' CELEBRATES THE DAWN OF FREEDOM

CANBOULAY DANCE Theatre has announced its major production for the 2002-2003 season: Maljo, choreographed by Canboulay Artistic Director Ronald Taylor. The title refers to the conquering of the mean spirit within humanity and the victory of the good.

It incorporates costumes by Taylor and sets designed by the esteemed visual artist Winsom, whose spiritually-charged work has been featured at the Art Gallery of Ontario, as well as across Canada and in the U.S. Maljo runs from December 12 to 14 at the Betty Oliphant Theatre.

Maljo makes use of three years of experimentation by Taylor into multi-layered rhythms related to the structures of African music. With repeated motifs that are revisited in new ways throughout the work, Maljo builds in intensity to a climax that speaks of hope and triumph in this new century. The performers include Taylor himself, with Denyse Alleyne, Denise Mitchell, Jean Sheen and Spirit Synott. It features live steelpan by Hameed Shaqq, percussion by Derek Thorne and recorded music. Lighting is by Brad Trenaman.

Founded by Trinidadian dancer/choreographer Ronald Taylor in 1993, Canboulay Dance Theatre explores diasporic African and Caribbean cultural, political and spiritual influences through a fusion with contemporary dance forms.

Derived from the Creole French "Cannes Brulés", the company's name refers to the celebrations of enslaved Africans in Trinidad and Tobago, held originally at the annual burning of the sugar cane fields after harvest, and later reinvigorated to mark the death of slavery.

Lasting about 70 minutes (without intermission), Maljo opens with a passage inspired by Watch Night church services. Since January 1, 1863, Black communities have observed the stroke of midnight not only as the beginning of a new year, but as the dawn of freedom, the moment when emancipation was officially proclaimed.

A second movement section, which uses the male corps moving in unison, portrays the theme of the "Reluctant Warrior" as articulated in the writing of former Black Panther and anti-racist activist Assata Shakur, who has been living in Cuba since 1984.

The third section focuses on the wake for the dead, the nine-day ceremony that moves from mourning to celebration as the departed spirit makes its safe passage to the other world.

The final section, which explores "Life, New Dawn", is created around John Rosmond Jefferson and James Weldon's song "Lift every voice and sing", which became the hymn of the civil rights organization NAACP (the National Association for the Advancement of Colored

People). Also known as the "Black National Anthem", it speaks to the importance of family with unshakable faith, restoring hope and

courage.

For tickets, please call the St. Lawrence Centre Ticket Line, 417-366-7723 or online at www.stlc.com



MALJO: The Canboulay cast of the 2002 presentation

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Canboulay's Maljo

Maljo — the conquering of the mean spirit within humanity and victory of good over evil — is the Canboulay Dance Theatre's production for the 2002-2003 season.

Choreographed by artistic director Ronald Taylor, Maljo incorporates multi-layered rhythms related to the structure of African music and repeated motifs revisited in new ways throughout the work, which took three years of experimentation to create.

Taylor, a dancer and choreographer, founded the Canboulay Dance Theatre in 1993. Canboulay refers to celebrations in Trinidad and Tobago held by

slaves from Africa at the burning of cane fields after harvest.

Performers include Taylor, Denyse Alleyne, Denise Mitchell, Jean Sheen and Spirit Synott. There will be music by Hameed Shaqq (panist) and Derek Throne (percussionist).

Maljo has four movements each focussing on a specific theme. The watch night church movement explores the theme of freedom. The second movement presents male corps moving in unison and the "reluctant warrior theme". The third movement focuses on the wake for the dead and the celebration of the departed spirit. It concludes with the "Life, New Dawn" theme celebrating the importance of restoring hope and courage and family.

Performances are at the Betty Oliphant Theatre, 404 Jarvis St., December 12-14 at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$17 for students and seniors. For more information call 416-366-7723 or go to www.stlc.com.

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